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AMERICAN CINEMA PROJECT/New York Center For Visual
History

"THE COMBAT FILM"
Host narration open
11/17/94
1:15

Hello, I'm John Lithgow. Welcome to American Cinema.

Sam Fuller, a great director and a veteran, says the only way to make a war movie realistic is to have someone with a rifle stand behind the screen and shoot at the audience. That is because war is so gruesome that nothing on the screen can ever really capture it.

During World War II, Hollywood produced films which softened the realities of war with tales of heroism and valor. The platoon of "Bataan" and "Guadalcanal Diary" portrayed an America true to its ideal, if not its reality: a model of ethnically diverse Americans working together.

There was always a tension between what Hollywood portrayed and what filmmakers experienced. Directors like John Ford and Samuel Fuller, who had really seen battle, brought a deeper urgency and understanding to the films they made. They left a legacy for the next generation.

When it came to Viet Nam, the conventions of Hollywood didn't match the soldier's reality. Filmmakers like Francis Ford Coppola, Michael Cimino and Oliver Stone recreated modern war with a vision that was grippingly realistic, but sometimes surreal. With narrator Matthew Modine, we'll see that telling war stories is a tradition, as old as conflict itself ... in the Combat Film.

THE NEW YORK CENTER FOR VISUAL HISTORY
AMERICAN CINEMA PROJECT
THE COMBAT FILM
Continuity Script
10/21/94

FILM CLIP: PLATOON

C/U - SOLDIER'S FACE WATCHING
APPROACHING ENEMY

AUDIO: HEAVY BREATHING,
HEARTBEATS, EXPLOSION

FILM CLIP: THE BIG RED ONE

LEE MARVIN IN CLIP

Ah, you'll live, Smitty. You just trip wired
a mine. They're not designed to kill ya',
just to castrate ya'.

NARRATOR

You've seen him in every war film - he's the
guy that's wet behind the ears, facing fear
by himself in an agony that is both
terrifying and exhilarating.

FILM CLIP: BATTLEGROUND
FILM CLIP: GUADALCANAL DIARY

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

It is this experience that the combat film
tries to recreate for the audience.

FILM CLIP: HAMBURGER HILL

ACTOR

You're on point.

ACTOR

Me?

ACTOR

There are no friendlies out there. Got a full load.

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

From World War I to Vietnam, Hollywood has rendered different portraits of the brutal life of the combat grunt.

CUT TO: OPEN TITLE OF
"THE BIG PARADE", THEN
CLIP OF THE BIG PARADE

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

It all started with World War I. That was different from any war before or since.

FILM CLIP: **WINGS**

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

William Wellman's "Wings" was the first movie to win an Academy Award for Best Picture. Wellman drew heavily on his experiences as a fighter pilot in World War I.

CUT TO: SAM FULLER
INTERVIEW

SAM FULLER

The first war movie I saw that I fell in love with was still ... and is still the best war picture ever made, called "All Quiet on the Western Front". And it was an honest picture because it was against war.

FILM CLIP: ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT

NARRATOR

During World War I, Lewis Milestone served with the Signal Corps. His first-hand knowledge of the horrifying slaughter in the trenches inspired a powerful anti-war statement.

CUT TO: PAUL FUSSELL
INTERVIEW

PAUL FUSSELL

The Second World War was a lot harder to fight for the people who fought it than the first, and one reason was that the cinema between the wars had developed a great tradition of anti-war movies.

CUT TO: ARCHIVE - CONSCRIPTION DAYS

NARRATOR

It was a different story with World War II. The Office of War Information mobilized Hollywood and its studio system to help out the war effort, keep up morale at home, and motivate the conscripts.

FILM CLIP: GUADALCANAL DIARY:

ACTORS IN DITCH SINGING

Bless 'em all.

CUT TO: THOMAS DOHERTY INTERVIEW

DOHERTY

The distinct thing about the combat squad is that the squad is the hero. The crew is the hero, prior to the Second World War, if you look at Americans they would tend to admire rugged individualists.

FILM CLIP: **GUADALCANAL DIARY**

DOHERTY (VO)

Hollywood also will tend to favor the cheeky newspaper reporter, the gangster, the private eye.

ACTOR

Come on, (Inaudible). Snap it up! Dig in, will ya'?

ACTOR

Maybe if we dig deep enough, we'll come up somewhere about Ebbits(?) Field!

ACTOR

Yeah! I'm practically standin' on second base right now!

CUT BACK TO: DOHERTY

DOHERTY (CONT'D)

In the Second World War you don't need the solo heroes, you don't need the Sargeant Yorks, the independent hot dogs. And the

recurrent message of the Second World War film is to subsume your individuality ...

FILM CLIP: AIR FORCE

NARRATOR

From career officer to enlisted man, everyone was portrayed as part of a team that would not allow for a loner.

ACTOR

Now get this into your head. We all belong to this airplane. Every man has got to rely on every other man to do the right thing at the right time. You've played football, Winosky. You know how one man can gum up the whole works.

CUT TO: PAUL FUSSELL
INTERVIEW

PAUL FUSSELL

The ideal platoon in these war films is really a very profound image which gratifies the audience, anxious for some evidence that the whole American experiment is a success.

FILM CLIP: BATAAN

ACTOR

Seems to me I saw you box somewhere.

ACTOR

Maybe Thanksgiving, on the Olympics Club?

(Inaudible)

NARRATOR

In reality, platoons were not integrated, as Hollywood portrayed them in 1943.

ACTOR

Matthew Hardy, Private, 12th Medical Battalion.

ACTOR

Alex Ramirez, Private, Provisional Tank Corps.

ACTOR

National Guard?

ACTOR

Yeah, 192nd Tank Battalion, California.

ACTOR

Wesley Epps, Private, 3rd Engineer Battalion.

CUT TO: STILL OF "OFFICE OF
WAR INFORMATION" LETTERHEAD
ON DOCUMENT

NARRATOR

The Office of War Information sanctioned all film scripts, using Hollywood to maximum effect in the propaganda war.

CAMERA PANS DOWN DOCUMENT
TO REVEAL TEXT

READER

"I'm glad to report that MGM's 'Bataan' appears to offer no problems from the OWI

Overseas standpoint. It makes an especially good contribution ...

FILM CLIP: BATAAN

READER (VO CONT'D)

"... in its handling of United Nations' characters, especially the Philipinos."

ACTOR

What do you think you're doing, soldier?

ACTOR

Plenty Japs over there, tanks, artillery. I go tell General McArthur, General sends planes, planes drop bombs on Japs. Bang! Fourth of July!

CUT TO: PAUL FUSSELL
INTERVIEW

PAUL FUSSELL

It's easy to understand why these films are all the same film during the war, because they are being ... their manufacture is being supervised by the Office of War Information. It's harder to understand something interesting, which is why these conventions persist when there is no censorship.

CUT TO: STILL OF CROWD
AROUND 1940S, CAMERA
PANS OVER STILL TO REVEAL
THEY ARE WAITING TO SEE
"BATAAN"

organized before the Japs send over their
reconnaissance planes.

FILM CLIP: PLATOON

PAUL FUSSELL (VO)

Well, I think the films of the Second World
War established paradigms which are still
extremely exploitable in movies as though as
neat, the democratic platoon. Interestingly,
the films that come from the Vietnam War,
which one might expect to be quite different
from the conventional films from the Second
War, are really very little difference.

FILM CLIP: THE BIG RED ONE

NARRATOR

Though Hollywood had established powerful
conventions, that did not prevent filmmakers
from rendering their personal experiences of
war.

FILM CLIP: THE BIG RED ONE

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

Their memories have inspired some of the most
powerful films Hollywood has made.

ACTOR

I can't murder anybody.

LEE MARVIN IN CLIP

We don't murder. We kill.

ACTOR

It's the same thing.

LEE MARVIN IN CLIP (CONT'D.)

The hell it is, Griff. You don't murder animals. You kill them.

CUT TO: SHOT OF SAM FULLER
GAZING OUT ON SHORELINE AND
OCEAN

NARRATOR

Sam Fuller made his first combat film in 1950. Prior to service in World War II, he was a hobo, reporter and screenwriter.

FILM CLIP: THE BIG RED ONE

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

Many filmmakers served their country ...
William Wyler ...

CUT TO: STILL OF WILLIAM
WYLER IN UNIFORM, THEN
JOHN HUSTON, THEN
JOHN FORD SITTING IN A JEEP

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

... John Huston, John Ford ...

CUT TO: CLIP OF DARRYL
ZANUCK "TIME MARCHES ON"
FOOTAGE WATCHING COMBAT

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

... Darryl Zanuck ...

CUT TO: STILL OF ROBERT
MONTGOMERY IN UNIFORM

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

... and actors like Robert Montgomery and ...

CUT TO: STILL OF LEE MARVIN
IN A SORT OF UNIFORM

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

... Lee Marvin. Combat films were
transformed by their experiences of battle.

CUT TO: ARCHIVE CLIP
OF EXPLOSION, THEN
CLIP OF SOLDIERS
MARCHING INTO WOODS
AUDIO: BING CROSBY -
"Hot time in the town of Berlin"

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

In May 1944, Lieutenant-Colonel Darryl Zanuck
was stationed in England directing the Signal
Corps Documentary Unit.

BING CROSBY IN CLIP

(Singing) There'll be a hot time in the town
of Berlin when the Yanks go marchin' in ...

CUT TO: ARCHIVE CLIP OF SOLDIERS
AND TANK GOING DOWN ROAD

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

The Allied Armies were forming the largest
invasionary force of the 20th Century and
Zanuck's job was to document their training
and the subsequent D-Day invasion.

BING CROSBY IN CLIP (CONT'D.)

... (singing) when the Brooklyn boys begin to take the joint apart and tear it down when they take old Berlin.

CUT TO: ARCHIVE CLIP OF
SOLDIERS SITTING AROUND
ON IN A FIELD

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

Sam Fuller was a lieutenant in the Big Red One Infantry Division, stationed near Exeter.

CUT TO: ARCHIVE CLIP OF
SOLDIERS JUMPING OFF
STONE WALL, THEN OTHER
CLIPS OF SOLDIERS TRAINING

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

He was training for the crucial landing of American forces on Omaha Beach. The Big Red One's task was to punch a hole in the enemy defenses, then form a beachhead through which the main force could pass into Normandy and on to Berlin.

BING CROSBY IN CLIP (CONT'D.)

... after they take Berlin.

CUT TO: STILL OF FULLER
AND ZANUCK

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

Fuller and Zanuck had different perspectives on the events of D-Day.

CUT TO: STILL FULL SHOT ZANUCK
SITTING ON ELEVATED CAMERA
PLATFORM, THEN STILL MEDIUM
SHOT ZANUCK

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

Zanuck had a bird's eye view. He saw himself
as the historian, the chronicler, documenting
every detail of June 6th, 1944.

CUT TO: STILL MEDIUM SHOT
FULLER SMOKING PIPE, THEN
TO CLIP OF FULLER DIRECTING
ON SET WITH LEE MARVIN

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

Fuller had a worm's eye view. He wanted to
tell the story of a few grunts and their
sergeant.

CUT TO: CLIP OF LEE MARVIN
INTERVIEW WHILE MAKING "BIG RED ONE"

LEE MARVIN IN CLIP

He's my kind of style of a storyteller. So
he said, "You know, I'm doing this thing call
'The Big Red One' and you're going to play
the sargeant." And I said, "Oh, yeah. Sure.
Right." And then as the years went by and I
guess he got through with his other
committments and assignments, he sat down one
day and he wrote it. And he sent me a copy
and I was just absolutely, you know, thrilled

with what I read. It's possibly one of the few combat stories that I ever thought that made any sense to me.

CUT TO: SAM FULLER INTERVIEW

SAM FULLER

I didn't want to compete with some very, very fine and highly exciting war movies I saw, "Iwo Jima", "The Longest Day". I've seen things like that ... wonderful, wonderful epics. I ... I was not interested in trying to top them. I was only knowledgeable about one thing ... I could not shoot it. Theirs was fake and I didn't want mine to be fake.

CUT TO: ARCHIVE NEWSREEL
CLIP - NORMANDY FOOTAGE

NEWSREEL ANNOUNCER

Omaha Beach, D-Day ...

SAM FULLER (VO CONT'D)

Every five minutes a wave came in, a wave of 32 infantrymen in a boat.

CUT BACK TO: SAM FULLER
INTERVIEW

SAM FULLER (CONT'D.)

The first wave was 6:30. The second wave was 6:35, the third wave 6:40 ... every five minutes.

CUT TO: ARCHVE CLIP OF D-DAY

SAM FULLER (VO CONT'D)

We can't get off. We can't go back. Over 3,000 was dead on the beach.

CUT TO: ARCHIVE OPENING CREDITS
WITH "MESSAGE FROM DARRYL
F. ZANUCK", THEN CLIP

DARRYL ZANUCK IN CLIP

The incredible story of D-Day and the invasion of Nazi-occupied Europe always fascinated me, as it was unquestionably the most hazardous undertaking in military history.

CUT TO: TRAILER FOR "THE
LONGEST DAY", THEN TO
"BIG RED ONE" (WRISTWATCH CLIP)

SAM FULLER (VO)

By the time I made up my mind how to shoot Omaha Beach, I decided just to show a man's wristwatch in the channel and the wave going over it and the wave going over it, and very gradually it shows you the time. It's 7. It's 7:30, 7:35, and it starts getting pink at 7:40. And it's 8, it's 8:30 and it starts getting redder. And by 9:25 it's blood red, and I thought that, for me, was the best way to show anyone visually, as close as we possibly can get to realism, through one source ... blood.

FILM CLIP: **THE LONGEST DAY**
SOLDIERS TAKING A TOWN

CUT TO: RICHARD ZANUCK INTERVIEW

ZANUCK

In restaging D-Day for "The Longest Day", there must have been 10,000, more or less, troops involved ... Frenchmen in American uniforms for the most part, four countries involved.

FILM CLIP: **THE LONGEST DAY**
BEARING I.D. "GOLD-JUNO BEACHES,
06:49 HOURS" SHOWING SHIPS
AND SOLDIERS RUNNING ONTO SHORE

ZANUCK (VO)

Only the actual invasion itself was probably more complicated in the logistical staging of this re-creation. My father had a passion for World War II ...

CUT BACK TO: ZANUCK INTERVIEW

ZANUCK (CONT'D.)

... particularly the ... the Normandy Invasion, because he was in the Signal Corps and he was in charge of the photographic unit that actually landed, and he came in sometime later that ... that day he landed behind the troops. And he ... he was always fascinated, ah, about telling that story and re-creating that event on film.

FILM CLIP: ARCHIVE
"MAKING OF THE LONGEST
DAY" (COLOR)

ZANUCK (VO CONT'D)

He wanted a director from each of the major countries that participated, but, in truth, they were really more second unit directors. My father was the main director for the whole operation and directed a lot of the American and English episodes himself.

FILM CLIP: THE LONGEST DAY:

ACTOR

Sorry I'm late, old boy.

ACTOR

Better late than never, sir.

ACTOR

Glad to see you, Shimmy.

PETER LAWFORD IN CLIP

You boys right on target. What's the situation?

ACTOR

Germany's regrouping over there in the woods, sir, about a mile. There's a lot of mortars and heavy machine guns.

PETER LAWFORD IN CLIP (CONT'D.)

Numbers?

ACTOR

No idea, Shimmy(?), but they seem to be moving forward and forward!

PETER LAWFORD IN CLIP (CONT'D.)

I guess we won't wait. Better get moving. All right, we're going across! Nevelin.

ACTOR

Sir?

ACTOR

Black beer, sir!

PETER LAWFORD IN CLIP (CONT'.D)

Come on! Everybody up! On your feet!

(Bagpipes)

CUT TO: DOHERTY INTERVIEW

DOHERTY

Zanuck wants to create nothing short of a filmic epic, a great expression of the ... the grandeur and glory of the American experience in the Second World War, a great production. He wants to be the Homer of the Second World War.

FILM CLIP: THE BIG RED ONE

DOHERTY (VO CONT'D)

I think what Sam Fuller wants to do in his films is tell, as much as a filmmaker can,

what exactly it was like to be there. He wants to capture the gestures, the vernacular ...

FILM CLIP: THE BIG RED ONE

DOHERTY (VO CONT'D.)

... the small moments that the combat grunt experiences, and he wants to do it in a very tight close-up. He wants things to happen unexpectedly. He also wants to remove the sentimentality from the platoon.

CUT TO: SAM FULLER INTERVIEW

FULLER

When we were in Czechoslovakia, they gave us an assignment, not knowing this was the last assignment of the war, the very last. And they said that there's a camp there ...

FILM CLIP: THE BIG RED ONE

FULLER (VO CONT'D)

... and they didn't say kill anybody. They wouldn't have to. They said, in effect, "Take it." Now this was a concentration camp. We found out it's a concentration camp. We opened doors. We saw what it was. We saw another door, a stone house and several naked bodies were thrown in the bogs.

CUT BACK TO: FULLER INTERVIEW

FULLER (VO CONT'D)

Captain Richmond said, "Have you got the candy your mother sent you?" And I said, "Yes, sir." "Get it!" Didn't explain anything.

CUT TO: ARCHIVE FOOTAGE OF PAPER STATING "PRESENTED BY THE 16TH INFANTRY REGIMENT COMMANDED BY COLONEL FREDERICK W. GIBB"

FULLER (VO CONT'D)

Now you take a picture - the name of the town is Falkanow.

CUT TO: SAM FULLER FOOTAGE -CLIPS OF ACTUAL CONCENTRATION CAMP SCENES (FALKANOW)

AUDIO: GRATING SOUND OF OLD MOVIE PROJECTOR

FULLER (CONT'D.) (VO)

That's the first time I used a camera. I never thought I'd use it.

CUT TO: ARCHIVE CLIPS OF AIR COMBAT FROM BATTLE OF MIDWAY

NARRATOR

The experience of combat changed directors physically and mentally. While directing this documentary, John Ford took over the camera when his cameraman was killed. Ford himself was later shot in both legs and lost sight in his left eye. Ford's experience of

combat clearly shaped "They Were Expendable", an elegaic Navy picture about sacrifice and defeat made at the end of the war.

CUT TO: CLIP OF FORD WATCHING "TIME MARCHES ON"
FILM OF EXPLOSION

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

During the war, Ford held the rank of Lieutenant Commander in Charge of the Field Photographic Branch at the Office of Strategic Services.

LINDSAY ANDERSON

He was glad to get away from Hollywood and he had ...

CUT TO: ANDERSON INTERVIEW

ANDERSON

... always wanted to be a naval man himself from way, way back. He failed to get into Annapolis when he was a young man and went to Hollywood.

CUT TO: STILL OF JOHN FORD

NARRATOR

Ford's end-of-war homage to those that served starred Robert Montgomery and John Wayne.

FILM CLIP: **THEY WERE EXPENDABLE**

JOHN WAYNE IN CLIP

Slug, he was always quotin' verse ...

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

Wayne had built a reputation as a B movie tough.

JOHN WAYNE IN CLIP (CONT'D.)

... bits of poetry ...

NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

And Ford changed all that.

JOHN WAYNE IN CLIP (CONT'D.)

So here's one for him. It's about the only one I know. Under the wide, starry sky, dig the grave and let me lie, glad that I lived and gladly die ...

CUT TO: **ANDERSON INTERVIEW**

ANDERSON

Many of these Hollywood films, after all, were made according to device. "Okay, we gotta make a war picture." Again, "We gotta make a picture that'll make people want to join the Army."

FILM CLIP: **THEY WERE EXPENDABLE**

ANDERSON (CONT'D.) (VO)

"They Were Expendable" is an extraordinary personal film.

ACTOR

Ten-hut! At ease.

ANDERSON (CONT'D) (VO)

It's a film, if you like, where heroism is equated with service.

ACTOR

You're a swell bunch. I'm glad to have been able to serve with you. I'd like to be able to tell you that we were going out to bring back help, but that wouldn't be the truth.

We're going down the line to do a job.

You're going to Bataan with the Army. That isn't what you've been trained for, but they need your help. You older men with longer service records, take care of the kids.

Maybe ... that's all. God bless you.

CUT TO: STILL MEDIUM SHOT
JOHN FORD

FILM CLIP: THEY WERE EXPENDABLE

ANDERSON (CONT'D.) (VO)

Ford was serving with the Navy throughout the war. He believed in what might nowadays be called "the myth of the Navy of service, of heroism".

CUT BACK TO: ANDERSON INTERVIEW

ANDERSON (CONT'D.)

Where every character in the film is filled with such conviction, reality, if you like, that they are ... they exist in themselves and not as a device for moving the story along.

CUT TO: STILL SHOT FORD
SITTING ON MOVIE SET

ANDERSON (CONT'D.) (VO)

What gives the film its power is the fact that Ford was a poetic filmmaker and so his people came ...

CUT TO: MOVIE CLIP: **THEY WERE EXPENDABLE**

ANDERSON (CONT'D.) (VO)

... to represent something greater than themselves. Ford's whole attitude to the subject is different from that of very many people and is very heartfelt.

FILM CLIP: **THEY WERE EXPENDABLE**

ANDERSON (CONT'D.) (VO)

The elegance of that moment, the time which is taken to accommodate all the expression that is being felt at that moment.

CLIP ENDS WITH "WE SHALL
RETURN" MESSAGE FROM
MacARTHUR" SUPERIMPOSED
OVER FLYING FIGHTER PLANE

CUT BACK TO: ANDERSON INTERVIEW

ANDERSON (CONT'D.)

It's absolutely not in the conventional
action tempo of a Hollywood picture.

CUT TO: FILM CLIP SHOWING
WHITE HOUSE AND CLOCK
SHOWING 8 O'CLOCK AND
"WASHINGTON, D.C.", THEN
PRESIDENT

PRESIDENT IN CLIP

I deem this reply a full acceptance of the
Potsdam Declaration which specifies the
unconditional surrender of Japan.

CUT TO: FILM CLIP SHOWING
REPORTERS RUNNING OUT OF
WHITE HOUSE. THEN TIMES
SQUARE TICKETAPE BILLBOARD

NARRATOR

With the end of the war, the partnership
between Washington and Hollywood ended, yet
audiences still wanted a victory parade...

FILM CLIP: **BATTLEGROUND:**

SOLDIER SINGING

Sound off 1,2, sound off 3,4, sound off 1 2 3
4, 1 2, 3 4. Your baby was lonely as lonely
could be. Ain't it great to have a pal who
works so hard to keep a morale.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The combat film developed a momentum of its
own that can still be felt today.

FILM CLIP: THE SANDS OF IWO JIMA
ENDING WITH THE FOUR MEN RAISING THE
AMERICAN FLAG AT IWO JIMA
WITH SOLDIERS LOOKING ON

CUT TO: ARCHIVE CLIP OF
AMERICANS PARADING
AROUND SMILING AND CARRYING
FLAGS

CUT TO: LUKEMAN INTERVIEW

TONY LUKEMAN

The whole generation of teenagers of World
War II and beyond who saw "Wake Island" and
"Sands of Iwo Jima" and "Flying Leathernecks"
and "Guadalcanal Diary" and those kinds of
movies ...

CUT TO: FOOTAGE FROM OFFICER TRAINING SCHOOL
SOLDIERS FILING INTO LARGE ROOM

TONY LUKEMAN (VO CONT'D)

... probably got their first impression of
what thought the corps was through the
movies.

CUT TO: FUSSELL INTERVIEW

PAUL FUSSELL

These films depicting the Second World War I
think are so popular and so successful in
part because they minister to a need in the
audience to believe them ...

CUT BACK TO: OFFICER SCHOOL FOOTAGE
SOLDIERS IN LARGE ROOM

PAUL FUSSELL (VO CONT'D)

... to believe that John Wayne is a heroic soldier and distinguished leader of troops.

SOLDIER IN CLIP

How we doin' there, Delta Company?

SOLDIERS IN CLIP

(Yelling)

SOLDIER IN CLIP (CONT'D)

Settle down now. I'm Lieutenant Frades and today we're going to look at a subject that probably is not new to all of you. In one form or fashion you've been exposed to trench warfare. You've seen those silver screen warriors and their hard-charging leaders running up the hills, assaulting those beaches, and reducing those bunkers. Now get that motivation up a little bit, we're going to look at some of those scenes now. You've probably seen these in the movies.

CLIP OF SOLDIERS WATCHING
JOHN WAYNE MOVIE "SANDS OF IWO JIMA"

JOHN WAYNE (CONT'D)

...Give me a hand with this pack.

SOLDIER IN CLIP

That sergeant's striker for doin' that
(inaudible) assault on that bunker ...

CUT TO: INTERVIEW OF MODERN
SOLDIER

SOLDIER

Well, your old movies like the ones about Audie Murphy and Sargeant York, those were great movies. I mean they're good patriotic movies. They don't ... they're not what you would call realistic, you know. Like John Wayne movies weren't realistic as much, but they're very patriotic and they give you a kind of sense of, "Hey, you know, I want to go do that." So ...

CUT TO: MOVIE TRAILER FOR
"SANDS OF IWO JIMA"

CUT TO: O'BRIEN INTERVIEW

TIM O'BRIEN

I'd come out of theater having seen some of these old films, movies like "Pork Chop Hill" and "To Hell and Back" with Audie Murphy, "Sands of Iwo Jima" with John Wayne, I'd come out of these movies having ... feeling a peculiar thing. The peculiar thing was I wanted to play war.

CUT TO: TRAILER FOR SANDS OF IWO JIMA

O'BRIEN (CONT'D.) (VO)

And I remember being with my little buddies

on a Saturday afternoon. We'd go out to the
golf course and pretend we were John Wayne.

CUT TO: MICHAUD INTERVIEW

GENE MICHAUD

When you've got John Wayne, you've already
got history right there in front of you.
Embodied in one character. He carries
himself as sort of a walking convention.

CUT BACK TO: JOHN WAYNE
FILM CLIP: **THE SANDS OF IWO JIMA**

MICHAUD (VO CONT'D)

He's the older, wiser enlisted. He has to
train young recruits and he also has to be
the father.

ACTOR

If it's in the line of duty, you can tell me
to do something and I'll do it, but as far as
my personal life goes, keep your hands off.

JOHN WAYNE IN CLIP

That's the same thing your father would have
told you.

ACTOR (CONT'D)

And I wouldn't have listened to him either.

JOHN WAYNE IN CLIP (CONT'D)

That's right. You never did.

ACTOR (CONT'D)

How do you know?

JOHN WAYNE IN CLIP (CONT'D)

He told me.

CUT TO: DOHERTY INTERVIEW

DOHERTY

Wayne in "Sands of Iwo Jima" is the great father figure, as always. He's the patriarch. He's going to teach this other generation how to be good Marines and how carry on. So in a way once he fulfills his work and they become good solid Marines, the father figure can then be slain because we know that the corps, the Marine Corps, is going to endure.

FILM CLIP: THE SANDS OF IWO JIMA

JOHN WAYNE IN CLIP

Well, Conway, see you made it.

ACTOR

Yeah, I guess that little voice was wrong. I feel better.

JOHN WAYNE IN CLIP (CONT'D)

I feel a lot better, too. As a matter of fact, I never felt so good in my life. How about a cigarette?

MOVIE CLIPS END WITH WAYNE
GETTING KILLED

CUT TO: SMITH INTERVIEW

WAYNE SMITH

John Wayne had great influence on me. I mean John Wayne is almost a cliché, indeed a cliché, for American representation of American macho. I think it's also ironic that John Wayne never was in war.

CUT TO: LUKEMAN INTERVIEW

LUKEMAN

John Wayne, of course, is a great hero. In the Marine Corps you see his picture in squad bays and ... and in offices about as often as you see the pictures of some of the great heroes of the Corps.

CUT TO: STILL MEDIUM SHOT
JOHN WAYNE IN COMBAT UNIFORM

LUKEMAN (VO CONT'D)

We even had a ... a part of the C ration that we called the "John Wayne cookie".

CUT TO: ARCHIVE:
TARAWA, I WAS THERE
OF COMBAT SOLDIERS
DRAGGING WOUNDED

NARRATOR

World War II saw the advent of the professional combat camera. For the first

time audiences regularly viewed footage of
combat in the weekly movie newsreels.

CUT TO: HATCH INTERVIEW

NORM HATCH

My first combat was Tarowa in the Pacific.

CUT TO: STILL MEDIUM SHOT
OF NORM HATCH

HATCH (VO CONT'D)

It was probably the first time that there was
really an organized photographic effort to

...

CUT BACK TO: HATCH INTERVIEW

HATCH (CONT'D)

... provide the Marine Corps with enough
training information on what actually happens
in combat.

CUT TO: ARCHIVE:
TARAWA, I WAS THERE

NEWSREEL ANNOUNCER IN CLIP

Sergeant Hatch went in with the first wave on
the landing at Tarowa armed with a pistol and
a hand camera. Brought back a film of the
fighting on that island that looks as though
it has been taken to a front line gunfight.

ARCHIVE:
TARAWA, I WAS THERE

HATCH (VO CONT'D)

In fact on Tarawa I was lucky enough to get the only film of the enemy in a fighting position against U.S. forces that really was taken during the whole war.

NEWSREEL ANNOUNCER IN CLIP

Here's one of them. Here's a squad of them.

HATCH (VO CONT'D)

I'm proud to say that that film of mine has been used probably in every film on the Pacific that's been made.

INTERCUT:

FILM CLIP: THE SANDS OF IWO JIMA

ARCHIVE: TARAWA, I WAS THERE

ACTOR

I'd like to know where the rest of the squad went. What's this place?

ACTOR

Whatever it is, it ain't healthy! Let's get outta here!

DOHERTY (VO)

Because so many Americans knew the second World War not in a full combat experience - they had certainly seen newsreels and combat reports of the time...

ACTOR

That was a close one!

CUT TO: DOHERTY INTERVIEW

DOHERTY (CONT'D)

... they would no longer accept a backlot rendering of the war. So there is a movement toward what you might call verisimilitude in the post-war era.

FILM CLIP: THE SANDS OF IWO JIMA

DOHERTY (VO CONT'D)

These films will often incorporate some newsreel footage or some (Inaudible) footage.

FILM CLIP: THE SANDS OF IWO JIMA

LEONARD FRIBOURG (VO)

I received orders to report to the studios.

CUT TO: FRIBOURG INTERVIEW

FRIBOURG (CONT'D)

They'd made arrangements with the Marine Corps in Washington to get all the footage out here that they could look at ...

CUT TO: ARCHIVE:
THE SHORES OF IWO JIMA

FRIBOURG (VO CONT'D)

... that had been taken during the combat in World War II. We watched the film 5 to 7 hours a day. They were looking for combat and for things that were real that they could use in the movie.

CUT TO: NEWSREEL CLIP
COMBAT

CUT TO: FULLER INTERVIEW

FULLER

Now about the closest I could think of making a real war movie is to have a couple of riflemen behind the screen and during a firefight on the screen. People in the audience are not killed, but are wounded.

FILM CLIP: **THE BIG RED ONE**
WITH LEE MARVIN AND STOCK
FOOTAGE FROM KOREAN WAR

FULLER (VO CONT'D)

That's about the only way I can see makin' a legitimate movie about war.

NARRATOR

Many people felt that combat footage revealed the reality of war, but some combat veterans thought different. When Sam Fuller made a film about the Korean War, he questioned the moral clarity of Hollywood's World War II victory parade. American's mixed feelings about society, race, and foreign policy were on the screen for the first time uncensored by the Office of War Information.

CUT TO: DOHERTY INTERVIEW

DOHERTY

We tend to think of the '50s as this era of Eisenhower and golf, but in reality the '50s is an era fraught with all kinds of cultural tensions. Take, for example, the racial tension that we see brought out to the fore in "The Steel Helmet" in a way it's not brought out in something like "Bataan".

FILM CLIP: THE STEEL HELMET

POW IN CLIP

I just don't understand you. You can't eat with 'em unless there's a war even if it's difficult. Isn't that so?

SOLDIER IN CLIP

That's right.

POW IN CLIP

You'll pay for a ticket, but you even have to sit in the back of a public bus. Isn't that so?

SOLDIER IN CLIP

That's right. A hundred years ago I couldn't even ride a bus. At least now I can sit in the back. Maybe in 50 years, sit in the middle. Someday even up front. There's some things you just can't rush, buster.

POW IN CLIP

You're a stupid man.

SOLDIER IN CLIP

You're the stupid Joe. Why don't ya' get wise, buster?

CUT TO: FULLER INTERVIEW

SAM FULLER

The Commies loved it, loved it, and it was reviewed in the Daily Worker and People's World. ... up until a certain part of the picture. Then I have these...

Then they said that this picture was financed by Douglas McArthur.

FILM CLIP: THE STEEL HELMET

ACTOR

It's a good thing this army isn't made up of a bunch fat-headed slobs like you that think this war is run by idiots! Just because those little rats kill our prisoners, that's no reason we have to do the same thing. No matter how sentimental or personal you get, you're supposed to be in the United States Infantry! Soldier! You're no soldier! You're just a big, dumb, stupid, selfish, fat-headed sargeant! And if it takes me 20 years, I'll see that you're shot for killin'

a prisoner of war. Understand? What are you waitin' for, Thompson? Sew him up! Give him blood!

ACTOR

Are you kiddin'? Blew a hole in him as big as a tunnel! I can drive a truck through it.

ACTOR

Ah!

DOHERTY (VO)

The critical reaction in "The Steel Helmet" was by and large confused because ...

CUT TO: DOHERTY INTERVIEW

DOHERTY (CONT'D)

... the film was a complicated film that doesn't lead itself to a simplistic sort of interpretation. The film raises many unpleasant and incongruent elements in the American character.

FILM CLIP: THE STEEL HELMET

ACTOR

Anybody in there?

DOHERTY (VO CONT'D)

If we have more unity in the Second World War, as remembered in "Sands of Iwo Jima" in '49, we have a little more equivocation into solution that's in "Steel Helmet" ...

SOLDIER

What's your outfit, soldier?

DOHERTY (VO CONT'D)

... where we see the increasing
disintegration of the American memory and
experience of ... of war.

ACTOR

Say, what kind of an outfit is this?

ACTOR

U.S. Infantry.

ACTOR

Where's your officer?

CUT BACK TO: DOHERTY INTERVIEW

DOHERTY (CONT'D)

And, of course, by the time we get to
"Platoon" the American platoon is not
fighting the enemy; they're fighting each
other.

FILM CLIP: **PLATOON**

CUT TO: ARCHIVE - THEATER
MARQUEE FOR "PLATOON"
OPNEING NIGHT

ANNOUNCER IN CLIP

Vietnam veterans disagree on whether this
shows the war exactly as they fought it, but
most agree it has a profound effect.

MAN IN CLIP

It's a pretty devastating film. It really is. It really touched the personal side of it.

MAN IN CLIP

For vets, be ready for it.

CUT TO: CLIP OF SOLDIERS
IN TRAINING LECTURE

CAPTAIN VICKERS IN CLIP

Good afternoon, candidates, I'm Captain Vickers, Leadership Office here at Officer Candidate School. Get cha' in the afternoon, get cha' during the death hour. To get us goin' this afternoon I'm going to show you a little bit of a film clip that's gonna give you a good idea of everything that's wrong when you talk about a military unit and the professionalism and the ethics that we expect them to demonstrate. Lights out.

TRAINING FILM CLIP: PLATOON

UNINTELLIGIBLE ACTORS

CAPTAIN VICKERS IN CLIP (CONT'D)

Kind of gives you an uneasy feeling, doesn't it? Think about that's a depiction of United States Armed Forces personnel ...

CUT TO: INTERVIEW

SOLDIER

I had problems with the depictions of the Americans being the ... the great aggressor and antagonist, and it's not so.

CUT TO: INTERVIEW

SOLDIER

Unfortunately, that clip of "Platoon" showed the military in an unfavorable light into its duties, but, by the same token, a realistic version of the military and what its function is can, I believe, help the military itself and the American public understand its ... its military and what it's there for. It's not there to be, somebody already said, John Wayne.

CUT TO: DOHERTY INTERVIEW

THOMAS DOHERTY

This is the problem the Vietnam generation has in going into Vietnam. That is, they apply the Hollywood frames of reference that they were brought up on in the 1940s and '50s to the new experience and it ... and it doesn't fit.

FILM CLIP: **PLATOON**

ACTOR

Barnes, What the fuck do you think you're doin'?

ACTOR

Stay out of this, Elias. This ain't your show.

ACTOR

You ain't a firing squad, you piece of shit!

CUT TO: ARCHIVE -
THE MAKING OF PLATOON

CUT TO: OLIVER STONE INTERVIEW

OLIVER STONE

Part of it was to remember the war before it was forgotten. People died and I remembered them very well, and I remember growing up in the war and I just, ah ... it was a rite of passage to and, ah, I wanted to ... like the (inaudible) said, I wanted ... I wanted to remember a time when people did this. I did not want that to be forgotten.

CUT TO: VIETNAM WAR FOOTAGE

STONE (VO CONT'D)

I served in 1967, September of '67 to December of '68 near Cambodia. Then I was wounded twice and got out of the combat. I got into a ...

CUT TO: STILL OF STONE IN VIETNAM

STONE (VO CONT'D)

... court marshall situation with my master sergeants. Most of them were assholes, in my

opinion.

CUT BACK TO: VIETNAM WAR FOOTAGE

STONE (VO CONT'D)

They never went to combat and they never were
in the field.

CUT TO: JOHN IRVIN INTERVIEW

JOHN IRVIN

There was a lot of resentment, obviously, and
I think that comes out in "Hamburger Hill".
I mean I think there's that ... a lot of
resentment, but a reluctant patriotism, I
suppose.

FILM CLIP: HAMBURGER HILL

IRVIN (VO CONT'D)

The people I've talked to in Vietnam didn't
have ... really are not ... obviously it was
possible to evade the draft. The people I
know didn't have the means or the will ...

ACTOR

It's from my girlfriend.

IRVIN (VO CONT'D)

... or even believe that it was right to ...

ACTOR (CONT'D)

Says she's not gonna write anymore. Friends
at college told her it was immoral to write
to me. Oh.

CUT TO: SMITH INTERVIEW

WAYNE SMITH

There were those of us who certainly thought the war was wrong, but felt in many ways as though we had to ... no choice other than to do what our duty was.

FILM CLIP: PLATOON

CUT TO: STONE INTERVIEW

OLIVER STONE

I was faced in "Platoon" with a jungle that's very difficult to see in. You, therefore, have to take the liberty of moving the enemy a little closer so that you can see. But often you never saw the enemy ...

FILM CLIP: PLATOON

STONE (VO CONT'D)

... but you'll feel 'im.

ACTOR

(Inaudible)

ACTOR

Get outta the bunker! They're gonna blow it!

CUT BACK TO: STONE INTERVIEW

STONE (CONT'D)

We did a lot of jiggy stuff to try to approximate the sense of not knowing where it's coming from or what you're shooting at,

FILM CLIP: **PLATOON**

STONE (VO CONT'D)

Very documentary with a long lens panning fast and shooting from position to position approximating your point of view which changes radically moment to moment.

CUT BACK TO: STONE INTERVIEW

STONE (CONT'D)

War is mostly boredom, long periods of boredom and then punctuated by terrifying seconds of madness and surrealism.

FILM CLIP: **HAMBURGER HILL**
SOLDIERS BEING FIRED UPON
FROM THE AIR

JOHN IRVIN (VO)

Apart from the fetter feeling I had and the great sympathy I had for the men who were fighting that war, the biggest single influence on me was the photography of Larry Burrows..

CUT TO: ARCHIVE -
BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL
OF WOUNDED SOLDIER
AND CAMERAMAN
PHOTOGRAPHING HIM

CUT TO: JOHN IRVIN INTERVIEW

IRVIN (CONT'D)

The camera is close to the ground. It tends to be behind the protagonists. In other

words, it tends to be where it would be in reality.

FILM CLIP: HAMBURGER HILL
SHOOTING SCENE IN VIETNAM WAR

IRVIN (VO CONT'D)

Having been a documentary filmmaker, I try and put it in a safe place, where it would be if it were live ammunition.

ACTOR

Sir?

ACTOR

What?

ACTOR

Your arm.

ACTOR

Oh.

CUT TO: DOHERTY INTERVIEW

DOHERTY

The ... the Vietnam film is impossible to understand unless you have all this other background about the World War II combat film and the post-war celebration of the Second World War onscreen. That Hollywood, in a way, feel complicit about that it has told Americans about war throughout the '40s, '50s, and 1960s. So when Hollywood comes to

make the Vietnam cycle, they have to say,
"Well, forget everything we told you in those
previous 30 years of war films. War is
really something that is horrible and, ah,
deadly and it can have no moral meaning."

FILM CLIP: THE DEER HUNTER

ACTOR

No!

ACTOR

Go ahead. Go ahead, Nicky. Just do it! Do
it! Go ahead!

STONE (VO)

I wrote "Platoon" in 1976, before the
"Apocalypse Now" and "Deerhunter" came out.

CUT TO: INTERVIEW OLIVER STONE

STONE (CONT'D.)

Those films, I view them as mythic movies,
you know, wonderfully made, crafted, Sergio
Leone kind of epics, you know, but for me
they ... they don't show the war that I knew.

FILM CLIP: APOCALYPSE NOW

STONE (VO CONT'D)

There's a fundamental evil realism about
them. "Apocalypse" is more Joseph Conrad,
had nothing to do with the war that most of,

as infantrymen, knew. We were having to find units where we were dealing with daily attrition and survival. That movie exists for me as a mythic view of Vietnam.

AUDIO: THE DOORS -
"THE END"

SINGER IN CLIP

Come on, baby, take a chance with us ...

CUT TO: CLIP FROM "HEARTS OF DARKNESS" OF FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA GIVING PRESS CONFERENCE USING INTERPRETER

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA

My ... my film is not a movie. My film is not about Vietnam. It is Vietnam.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA (VO)

The way we made it was very much like the way the Americans were in Vietnam. We were in the jungle. There were too many of us and, little by little, we went insane.

MAN IN CLIP (VO)

They trained young men about violent people, but their commanders won't allow them to write "fuck".

CUT TO: INTERVIEW JOHN IRVIN

IRVIN

When Francis Ford Coppola stands up at the

Cannes Film Festival with his hands outstretched and says, "I am Vietnam," I think is really like Zanuck saying, "I want to be the whole of the Second World War." I think Jim Carabuctus, who was there, wrote a very honest, a very direct version of the Vietnam experience.

FILM CLIP: HAMBURGER HILL

ACTOR

Okay. Let's get ready. Let's take this squad. Teddy Ford, May 17th. How long have you been on this hill, soldier?

ACTOR

What?

ACTOR

Hey, brother, how many times you been up and down this hill?

ACTOR

What are you doin' here?

ACTOR

My job.

ACTOR

Bullshit. (Inaudible)

ACTOR

Hey, word down at division is you guys can't take this hill. What do you have to say

about that? In fact, Senator Kennedy says you guys don't have a chance at all.

CUT TO: WAYNE SMITH INTERVIEW

SMITH

In Vietnam something, perhaps the fear of death, we African Americans, in particular, and young white guys especially who were more hip, who were not necessarily lifers ...

FILM CLIP: **PLATOON**
WAR PARTY SCENE, SOLDIERS
PARTYING TO "TRACKS OF MY
TEARS" BY SMOKEY ROBINSON

SMITH (VO CONT'D)

... were able to relate to one another and develop a sense of love that is so remarkable and if I were to say anything was lost for me, to this day I grieve.

DOHERTY

Beginning with the Second World War, certainly throughout the '50s and on through the Vietnam cycle, one thing the combat film represents is the American dream of equality, justice, and no class distinctions.

FILM CLIP: **APOCALYPSE NOW**
SHOWING PLANES BOMBING BRIDGE

ACTOR

Mayday! Mayday! I'm goin' in. To hell
(Inaudible). I got control.

FILM CLIP: AIR FORCE

DOHERTY (VO CONT'D)

The contradictions that we see in the films is the contradictions we see in combat itself, which is an experience that is at once so horrifying and glorious.

ACTOR

Tommy, get rid of your sight. You and go out through the bomb bay.

ACTOR

(Inaudible)

ACTOR

Get goin'! I'll use the escape hatch. Go on! They'll have to drag the bottom of the ocean to get this. Open your escape hatch. I'll throw it out

DOHERTY (VO CONT'D)

During the Second World War our memory of it, and Hollywood's presentation of it, is going to emphasize those other qualities.

ACTOR

(Inaudible) Go on! Get out!

FILM CLIP: BATAAN

DOHERTY (VO CONT'D)

Like at the end of "Bataan" when the machine

(Inaudible) the enemy and we know the character is dying, but his death is glorious. And more importantly than the glory is the immortal moment of that. We know that the sacrifice has paid off.

FILM CLIP: PLATOON

DOHERTY (VO CONT'D)

What's so terrifying about the Vietnam experience on film is that we see that the death of these characters that we care about and we know it has no moral payoff.

CUT TO: INTERVIEW JOHN IRVIN

IRVIN

I would like to see Spike Lee or a black filmmaker make a film about Vietnam. And until that is done, I think there's going to be a great void in the Vietnam genre.

FILM CLIP: BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL

END OF TRANSCRIPT

PAUL FUSSELL (CONT'D.) (VO)

It's as if the audience demanded that the films follow these rigid conventions because those conventions produce feelings and emotions which are universally gratifying to the audience.

Not Here
FILM CLIP: **BATAAN**

NARRATOR

The Second World War gave birth to a new type of film, the combat picture.

FILM CLIP: **GUADALCANAL DIARY**

ACTOR

All right.

NARRATOR

By design or default, Hollywood had devised its own rules and formulas that filmmakers have used ever since.

ACTOR

Father! Father Donnelly! He's been hit!

ACTOR

He'll be all right. It's a concussion. Don't burrow in so deep. Next time just cushion yourself your your elbows.

FILM CLIP: **BATAAN**

ACTOR

At ease. We'll have a few minutes to get